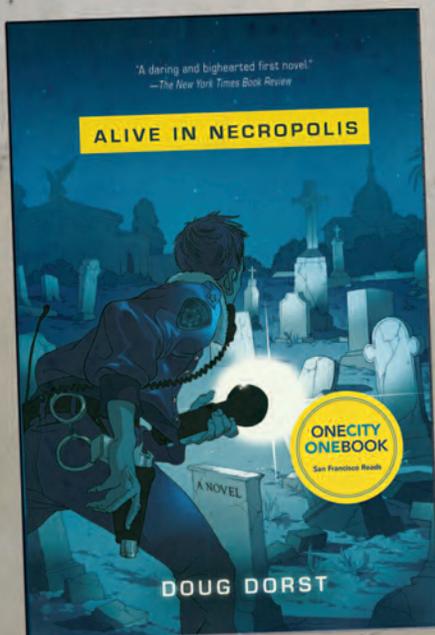


ONECITY ONEBOOK

San Francisco Reads



Fall 2009

A Citywide Book Club
sfpl.org/ocob

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Colma Cemetery. Courtesy S.F. Historical Photograph Collection



A message from Mayor Gavin Newsom

For the fifth year in a row, I am pleased to welcome you to the San Francisco Public Library's One City One Book: San Francisco Reads, our city's annual communal celebration of the joys and benefits of reading.

Join thousands of other readers at bookstore events, branch discussions, film screenings and dozens of other events

focusing on Doug Dorst's *Alive in Necropolis*. Set in the city of Colma, it is a rollicking tale of policing the dead, with deceased citizens far outnumbering the living. Dorst's novel gives us a fresh take on some of the City's most illustrious citizens, living and not, alongside an engaging look at one of our local men in blue.



Jewish Cemetery—now Mission Park, 1876
Courtesy S.F. Historical Photograph Collection

A message from City Librarian Luis Herrera

For a city librarian, it's especially exciting to see homegrown talent produce a work of fiction as smart, imaginative and flat-out funny as Doug Dorst's *Alive in Necropolis*.

With a splash of San Francisco's most colorful history and the backdrop of a modern-day Colma, complete with acres of tombstones and sarcophagi, Stanford grad Dorst gives us a massively entertaining story that the *SF Weekly* called "good-cop-in-deadland." Please share the work with your fellow readers—talk about it at scheduled programs and impromptu water cooler book discussions, check it out from your local branch library, buy it at one of San Francisco's fine booksellers, and just enjoy this great tale!



Pets Rest Cemetery. Courtesy S.F. Historical Photograph Collection

ALIVE IN NECROPOLIS

About the Book

A fresh, imaginative debut novel about a young police officer in northern California struggling to keep the peace—and maintain a grip on reality—in a town where the dead outnumber the living.

Colma, California is the only incorporated city in America where the dead outnumber the living. The longtime cemetery for San Francisco, it is the resting place of the likes of Joe DiMaggio, Wyatt Earp and aviation pioneer Lincoln Beachey. It is also the home of Michael Mercer, a rookie cop trying to go by the book as he struggles to navigate a new realm of grownup relationships—including a shaky romance with an older woman; a growing alliance with his cocky, charismatic partner, Nick Toronto; fading college friendships; and an aching sense of responsibility for a local rich kid whom Mercer rescues from a dangerous prank in the cemetery.

But instead of settling comfortably into adult life, Mercer becomes obsessed with the mysterious fate of his predecessor in the police unit, Sergeant Featherstone, who seems to have become confused about whether he was policing the living or the dead. And as Mercer delves deeper into Featherstone's story, it appears that Mercer's own sanity is beginning to slip—either that, or Colma's more famous residents are not resting in peace as they should be.

With all the playful sensitivity of Haruki Murakami and the haunted atmosphere of Paul Auster, but with a voice all his own, Doug Dorst has crafted an irresistible, compelling debut.

"If Colma, California, didn't exist, novelists would have to invent it. But it does exist, and a novelist—Doug Dorst, to be exact—has cannily taken advantage of that...It's an intriguing mix of coming-of-age story, police procedural and magical realism."

The Seattle Times



About the Author

Doug Dorst is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, a former Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford University and a recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the James Michener/Copernicus Society and the MacDowell Colony. *Alive in Necropolis* is his first novel.

His first short-story collection, *The Surf Guru*, is forthcoming from Riverhead Books in 2009.

His stories have appeared in *McSweeney's*, *Ploughshares*, *The Atlantic Unbound*, *The Sun*, *ZYZZYVA* and other journals.

His first play, *Monster in the Dark*, a collaboration with foolsFURY Theater Company, had runs in San Francisco and Berkeley earlier this year. *The San Francisco Examiner* found *Monster* "masterful... fascinating throughout," and *SF Weekly* cited the play in naming foolsFURY San Francisco's Best Theater Company of 2008.

A longtime resident of the San Francisco Bay Area, Doug holds a BA from Stanford and a JD from UC-Berkeley's Boalt Hall and he has taught writing at Stanford and in the MFA program at the California College of the Arts.

He currently lives in Austin, Texas where he is an assistant professor of creative writing at St. Edward's University and serves on the Board of Directors of Austin Bat Cave, a non-profit writing center for kids.

"Doug Dorst's smart and accessibly unconventional first novel, *Alive in Necropolis*... is not quite a horror story, nor exactly a mystery, nor just a hard-boiled police procedural, but an adult coming-of-age saga that pulls with energy and imagination from these various genres...Shot through with streaks of black humor to vivid, insightful effect...*Alive in Necropolis* proves truly haunting."

San Francisco Chronicle

ONE CITY ONE BOOK

September

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Alive in Necropolis book discussion

Mission Bay Branch Library
960 Fourth St. (at Berry)
(415) 355-2838

Sunday, Sept. 27, 12 – 3 p.m.
"City of Souls" - Colma Cemetery Bike Ride
Meet at Colma BART Station

Co-sponsored by the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition
See the cemeteries and gravesites of historic figures that inspired Doug Dorst's *Alive in Necropolis*. After the tour, there will be an option to ride back to San Francisco with the group. Tour leader Chris Carlsson is the Director of FoundSF.org, a living archive of San Francisco history, and the author of books on San Francisco. Rain cancels (atmospheric heavy fog does not!). Bring weather appropriate gear, lots of water and a bag lunch for this hilly ride! Please RSVP to sfplprogram@gmail.com or (415)557-4295.



Mission Dolores Cemetery, 1868
Courtesy S.F. Historical Photograph Collection

**Tuesday, Sept. 29
6 p.m.**
Documentary Films:
Trina Lopez's *A Second
Final Rest* and Justin
Schein's *Gravediggers*

Main Library,
Koret Auditorium
100 Larkin St.
A Second Final Rest: The History of San Francisco's Lost Cemeteries exhumes the hidden history of how this modern metropolis managed to systematically relocate nearly all of its burial grounds to make room for the living. In Schein's *Gravediggers* we meet the men who have devoted their lives to tending the graves of Holy Cross Cemetery in Colma. Filmmaker Trina Lopez will appear in person for a Q&A.

**Wednesday, Sept. 30
6:30 p.m.**
The Death/Funeral
Culture in San Francisco,
1880-1940

Main Library, Latino/His-
panic
Community Meeting Room
100 Larkin St.
Timothy Keegan will share research and talk about the rituals and customs with death and funerals in late 19th to early 20th century San Francisco.

Unless specifically noted, the author will not be present at events/book discussions.

October

**Thursday, Oct. 1
6 p.m.**
Alive in Necropolis
book discussion

Books Inc., Opera Plaza
601 Van Ness Ave.
(415) 776-1111

**Saturday, Oct. 3
3:30 – 5 p.m.**
Tarot for Teens
Visitacion Valley Branch
45 Leland Ave.

Explore tarot card reading, palm reading, astrology, numerology, I-Ching and dream interpretation.
For ages 12 to 18.
To register, contact Abby at aharwood@sfpl.org or (415) 355-2848.

**Thursday, Oct. 8
6 p.m.**
Alive in Necropolis
book discussion

Books Inc.
Market Street
2275 Market St.
(415) 864-6777

Thursdays at Noon 
One City, Five Films
Main Library, Koret Auditorium, 100 Larkin St.
Oct. 1: Beetlejuice **Oct. 8: Ghostbusters**
Oct. 15: Colma: The Musical
Oct. 22: Corpse Bride **Oct. 29: I Am Legend**

Friday, Oct. 9, 8 p.m.
Black, White and Red: Litquake's Book Ball
Herbst Theater's Green Room
401 Van Ness Ave. (at McAllister St.)
Litquake kicks off its 10-year anniversary with a ball loosely modeled on Truman Capote's famous Black and White ball held in the late '60s. Attendees will mingle with many authors, including Doug Dorst. For ticket details visit litquake.org

Saturday, Oct. 10, 3 p.m.
Author reading with Doug Dorst
Books Inc.: Opera Plaza
601 Van Ness Ave., (415) 776-1111

**Saturday, Oct. 10
7:30 – 9:30 p.m. (doors at 7 p.m.)**
Doug Dorst reads at Writers with Drinks
The Make-Out Room
3225 22nd. St.
\$3-\$5 sliding scale. All proceeds benefit local non-profits.

Sunday, Oct. 11, 11 a.m.
Notable Figures of San Francisco:
Free Cemetery Walking Tour in Colma
Holy Cross Cemetery
1500 Mission Road, Colma
(415) 355-2848
Joining the tour, led by Monica Williams of Holy Cross Cemetery, will be author Doug Dorst. Co-sponsored by SF History Association

ONE CITY ONE BOOK

Monday, Oct. 12, 6 – 8 p.m.
Spirits, Tarot & the Page ...
One City One Book One Bar

The Page
298 Divisadero St.
(at Page St.)
21 and over



Help the San Francisco Public Library fête this year's One City One Book pick. It's only fitting that we'll be celebrating this can't-put-down supernatural thriller with custom "Necropolis" cocktails, free Tarot card readings, and a live reading from Dorst himself. The Page Bar inspired a bar on the pages of *Alive in Necropolis*—have you spotted it yet? Book sales by Green Apple Books.

Wednesday, Oct. 14
6 p.m.

Author reading
with Doug Dorst

Book Passage
Ferry Building
1 Ferry Building
(415) 835-1020

Thursday, Oct. 15
6 p.m.

Alive in Necropolis
book discussion

Books Inc.: Marina
2251 Chestnut St.
(415) 931-3633

Friday, Oct. 16
4-5:30 p.m.

Ghost Hunting
for Teens

Portola Branch Library
380 Bacon St.
(at Goettingen)

A real ghost hunter from the SF Ghost Society, Tommy Netzbund, will be talking about his experiences investigating ghosts and hauntings. Ages 12 to 18. To register, contact Abby at (415) 355-5660 or aharwood@sfpl.org.

Tuesday, Oct. 13, 6 p.m.
Doug Dorst in conversation
with Adam Johnson, with
special guests foolsFURY

Main Library, Koret Auditorium
100 Larkin St.

Presented by One City One Book
and Litquake

Join us for an insightful discussion between Dorst and author/Stanford University lecturer Adam Johnson. foolsFURY Theater Company, under the direction of Ben Yalom, will open the evening with a staged reading from the book. Q&A and book signing with Doug Dorst follows. Book sales by Book Bay.

Saturday, Oct. 17, 11 a.m.

Raking the Ashes: Genealogical
Strategies for pre-1906 San Francisco
Research

Main Library, Latino/Hispanic
Community Rm., 100 Larkin St.

Nancy Peterson, Certified Genealogist and Research Director for the CA Genealogical Society, will talk about San Francisco's old cemeteries. Where did the bodies go and what records followed them? Who and what was left behind and never moved at all?

Thursday, Oct. 22
7 p.m.

Alive in Necropolis
book discussion

Books Inc.
Laurel Village
3515 California St.
(415) 221-3666

Saturday, Oct. 24
2:30 p.m.

Alive in Necropolis
book discussion

Western Addition
Branch Library
1550 Scott St.
(415) 355-5727

Display:
Sept.–Nov. 2009
19th century
Odd Fellows'
Cemetery Tombstones

Main Library, Sixth Floor
S.F. History Center
100 Larkin St.

These Odd Fellows' Cemetery tombstone fragments were unearthed in San Francisco backyards. The Odd Fellows' Cemetery was dedicated in 1865. In 1933, the bodies were removed to the Greenlawn Cemetery in Colma. Most of the stonework was used to construct the seawall at Aquatic Park, although some odds and ends were left behind.

Wednesday, Oct. 28, 6:30 p.m.

Cabbage Patches and Marble Orchards:
San Francisco's Necropolis at Colma

Main Library, Latino/Hispanic Community Room
100 Larkin St.

A talk from Colma cemetery expert Michael Svanevik, author of *City of Souls* and *Pillars of the Past: At Rest at Cypress Lawn Memorial Park*. Learn about how an outlying farm community became part of San Francisco's culture and the largest burial ground in the world.

Wednesday, Oct. 28, 7 p.m.

Excelsior Arts and Culture Salon
with Marilyn Yalom

Excelsior Branch Library
4400 Mission St. (at Cotter), (415) 355-2868

The author of *The American Resting Place: Four Hundred Years of History through Our Cemeteries and Burial Grounds*

Saturday, Oct. 31, 10:30 a.m.

San Francisco Pioneer Cemeteries

Main Library, Latino/Hispanic Community Room
100 Larkin St.

Ron Filion, co-manager of the SF Genealogy web site, will take you on an historical tour of the earliest cemeteries in San Francisco. He will show their locations, discuss how the City's growth affected them, and share stories about their relocations. This presentation will not be for the faint of heart.



Workmen digging up graves in Odd Fellows Cemetery
Courtesy S.F. Historical Photograph Collection

READ & DISCUSS

ALIVE IN NECROPOLIS

One City One Book Discussion Questions

1. In modern cities, there is a necessary coexistence between the living and the dead—both sharing the same physical space. Paris, with its underground catacombs, is another example. How might this affect the psychic landscape of the place and its inhabitants? What is the impact of always having this shadow, a ghost of the idea of death, fixed in one's rear view mirror?
2. Mercer finds his path to policehood after a few abandoned careers, a late bloomer in the most sincere sense. What influences his decision and draws him to this position? And how does his dedication or motivation change over the course of the novel—what is his reason for staying on such an unusual beat?
3. The banter among the Colma police force becomes a true star force in the novel—alternately exuberant, playful, politically incorrect, naughty, and amusing. How does this inside slice of police life add to the flow of the storytelling and our experience of it? What insights are gained through listening in?
4. Lillie Hitchcock Coit. Phineas Gage. Lincoln Beachey. Did you find the author's choice to reanimate some of San Francisco's most famous (or infamous) residents convincing? If so, what made them so convincing? Do you think the effect would be the same if the author had used non-historical characters? Did their dimensionality/violence/obsessions surprise you?
5. Why do you think the ghosts remain restless—and what keeps them in this searching, limbo state? What do you think "The Root" is?
6. Who is actually "alive in the necropolis" of Colma? Those living fully without regret, those choosing to "die like an aviator"? Might the author be trying to say something about what the point of living might actually be, and the importance of the bonds we make?
7. When we meet Sergeant Wes Featherstone he is already deceased, and it is through his grieving wife's anecdotes and the stacks of unprocessed police reports she presents to Mike that we get a sense of his trials. Through this unique device we come to learn not only the crimes and misdemeanors of Colma's ghost population but of Wes' own regrets in his life. What else do we gain as readers through this exposition?

8. Why do you think Mercer begins to see and hear the dead? What is it about his state of mind that makes him a candidate? Why might Featherstone have been targeted as well?
9. Mercer struggles deeply with, and is hypersensitive to, the idea of living a "mediocre" life—he worries about falling short (or settling for less) in his love life, especially versus Owen's success, about his choice of apartments, about his career path. Jude shares the same preoccupation—though struggles in his own teenage, self-destructive way. How does this set them up for their intersecting journeys? What happens to those, like Fiona perhaps, who have come to embrace just exactly what life presents them, mediocre or non-perfect as it is?
10. "Shut up and die like an aviator" is an ever-present mantra throughout the novel—repeated by members of the squad, and through Beachley's actions among others. Do you feel there could be another mantra (or theme) in the novel that comes to the forefront and has resonance?
11. How does Mercer's constant awareness of "The Book"—his conduct laws—influence his actions in the story? What steers his decisions to follow them or not? Why does he bend the rules when he does—and what are the consequences? (Might this make him more human in our eyes—or less of a "perfect" cop?)
12. What is it about Mercer's character that draws other needy characters toward him, and to trust and depend on him? Who are Mercer's protectors or guardians in the story?
13. Mercer's absent father functions as yet another looming ghost in the novel—one that everyone but Mercer sees on the street and is touched by. What might that tell us about what Mercer chooses to acknowledge and see in his own life? What have been the consequences of this for him?
14. The crescendo of desperation at the end of the novel—of desperate people, of desperate acts, everyone losing control—is particularly hard-hitting for the reader. Especially in the case of Toronto, Jude and Fiona, everyone has given up the reins as Mercer struggles to put his life back in focus. Were you shocked by any of these particular breakdowns?

Questions courtesy of Picador USA: www.picadorusa.com

LISTEN HERE

COLMA HISTORY

Doug Dorst's Music Playlist for *Alive in Necropolis*

I generally listen to music when I write — sometimes just one song at a time, on infinite-repeat, which somehow helps me to ignore my Inner Critic and write more freely. These are some of those songs, the ones that both helped me write and resonated with themes and moods in the book.

Gather by Jay Farrar

On the Way Downtown by Peter Case

Get Miles by Gomez

Dry River by James McMurtry

Alone Again Or by Calexico with Nicolai Dunger (from the *Convict Pool* EP)

Misunderstood by Wilco (studio version, from *Being There*)

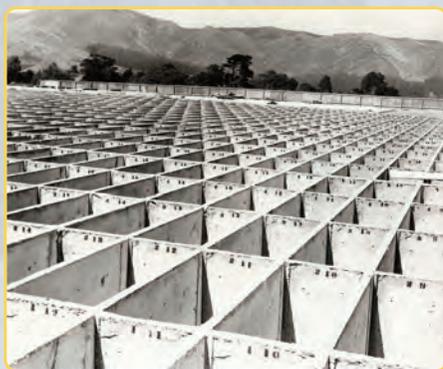
The Bleeding Heart Show by The New Pornographers

Plan to Stay Awake by The Deathray Davies

All of it, All by Phosphorescent (from *The Weight of Flight* EP)

Beware of Darkness by George Harrison

That Teenage Feeling by Neko Case



Holy Cross Cemetery, Colma
Courtesy S.F. Historical Photograph Collection

The Pearl by Emmylou Harris
(from *Red Dirt Girl*)

Slainte Mhath by Marillion

A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall
by Bill Frisell

Wall of Death by R.E.M.

Airline to Heaven by Billy Bragg
& Wilco

To learn more about why these songs inspired Doug, visit
http://www.largeheartedboy.com/blog/archive/2009/06/book_notes_doug_2.html



Cypress Lawn Cemetery, Colma
Courtesy S.F. Historical Photograph Collection

A Short History of Colma

In Colma, a city where the dead outnumber the living by a thousand to one, the residents have a motto: "It's great to be alive in Colma." Home to 17 cemeteries (for both humans and our animal friends), Colma found its calling in 1912, when San Francisco declared cemeteries to be a "public nuisance" and evicted the dead entirely.

Colma was already home to a number of cemeteries, partially because a streetcar line followed Mission Street down to the San Mateo County city and also because San Franciscans could travel to and from burial services within the same day. But after the 1912 law, Colma became home to the remains of hundreds of thousands of bodies originally put to rest in San Francisco, including those of illustrious citizens such as Major James Van Ness, Andrew Smith Hallidie (inventor of the cable car) and famed San Francisco eccentric Emperor Norton.

The dead's original tombstones were used to pave gutters in Buena Vista Park, to create the breakwater near the St. Francis Yacht Club, and even dumped wholesale into the Bay.

Colma is also the final resting place of a number of widely known historic figures that appear in *Alive in Necropolis*, including Joe DiMaggio, Wyatt Earp, and Lillian Coit, along with Tina Turner's dog—who was buried wrapped in a fur coat at Pet's Rest.

Sources: *Encyclopedia of San Francisco*:
A publication of the SF Museum and Historical Society and the City of Colma website

HERE LIES MORE

INFO AND BOOKS

Selected San Francisco death-related resources available through the San Francisco History Center.

Chinese American Death Rituals: Respecting the Ancestors
Edited by Sue Fawn Chung and Priscilla Wegars
393.0899 C4416

Cypress Lawn
Minds Eye Pictures
VIDEO 979.469 CYPR

Epitaphs. Mission San Francisco de Asis Cemetery (Mission Dolores) San Francisco, California

Charles Francis Griffin
979.461 G875e

Location, Regulation and Removal of Cemeteries in the City & County of San Francisco
William Proctor
979.461 P942L

Lone Mountain: The Most Revered of San Francisco's Hills: Annals of the Pioneers Copied from Headstones and Other Old Records
Ann Clark Hart
917.9461 H251

Department of Public Health, Death Records, 1865 – 1905
Available on microfilm in the San Francisco History Center

Records from Tombstones in Laurel Hill Cemetery, 1853-1927
Daughters of the American Revolution.
California State Society. Genealogical Records Committee.
920.079 D265

California Death Index, 1905 – 1939
Available on microfilm in the San Francisco History Center and Magazines & Newspapers Center

California Death Index, 1940 - 1997
<http://vitals.rootsweb.ancestry.com/ca/death/search.cgi>
Also available on microfiche in the San Francisco History Center and Magazines & Newspapers Center

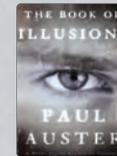
San Francisco Office of the Chief Medical Examiner's Records, 1902-1956
Names, circumstances, and statistics about people who died in San Francisco of "unnatural" causes or whose deaths otherwise legally required investigation. Requires 24-hour advance notice for access.

Halsted N. Gray – Carew & English Funeral Records, 1850 – 1924
Record books, daybooks, and registers from six San Francisco mortuaries: N. Gray & Company, Halsted & Company, Clark & Booth Funeral Home, Julius S. Godeau Funeral Home, H. F. Suhr Funeral Home, and Gantner - Felder - Kenny Funeral Home. Requires 24-hour advance notice for access.

Please visit the San Francisco History Center on the Sixth Floor of the Main Library.

If you enjoyed *Alive in Necropolis*, you may also like these imaginative reads:

The Book of Illusions
by Paul Auster



The Brief History of the Dead
by Kevin Brockmeier

The Ghost in Love
by Jonathan Carroll

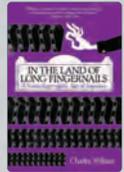


The Graveyard Book
by Neil Gaiman



Kafka on the Shore
by Haruki Murakami

In the Land of Long Fingernails: A Gravedigger in the Age of Aquarius
by Charles Wilkins



Pride and Prejudice and Zombies: The Classic Regency Romance — Now with Ultraviolet Zombie Mayhem!
By Jane Austen and Seth Grahame-Smith

The Monsters of Templeton
by Lauren Groff



The Somnambulist



Spook: Science Tackles the Afterlife
by Mary Roach

The Time Traveler's Wife
by Audrey Niffenegger



All books are available at the San Francisco Public Library.

THE LATE FAMOUS OF THE BAY AREA

The Late Famous of the Bay Area

by Kevin Fagan, *San Francisco Chronicle* Staff Writer

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

The Bay Area has more than its share of celebrities, but it's particularly rich in one class of famous people you'll never catch a sighting of.

Not above ground, at least.

From the wacky Emperor Norton and baseball legend Joe DiMaggio to the founder of the Ghirardelli Chocolate empire, thousands of the most important figures in the past century and a half of the nation's history populate crypts, coffins and cremation urns from Oakland to Colma.

The mother lode of those graves is the tiny city of Colma, where 17 cemeteries sprawl across an expanse of fields about 5 miles south of San Francisco. Established at the turn of the 1900s as a necropolis to take San Francisco's dead after city leaders evicted most of the cemeteries, Colma now hosts the remains of 1.5 million people. And 13,000 animals, if you count the Pet's Rest cemetery for critters.

Among Colma's permanent residents are DiMaggio and fellow slugger Lefty O'Doul, California Gov. Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, assassinated San Francisco Mayor George Moscone, jeans innovator

Levi Strauss and sugar king Claus Spreckels. And—again, if you count Pet's Rest—singer Tina Turner's dog, wrapped in one of the star's fur coats.

The more-than-a-little bizarre Norton, a.k.a. Joshua Abraham Norton, is also buried in Colma. He was essentially a street bum who declared himself Emperor of the United States, and was benevolently cared for by bemused city residents. When he died in 1880, more than 10,000 people jammed his funeral.

Not far from Norton are the graves of true-life newspaper emperors William Randolph Hearst, founder of the newspaper chain that owns *The Chronicle*, and Charles de Young, original co-founder of *The Chronicle*.

The San Francisco National Cemetery in the Presidio managed to escape the graveyard eviction craze of the early 1900s, and it features the remains of African American "buffalo soldiers" and Pauline Cushman-Fryer, a renowned spy for the Union Army during the Civil War. Also spared the city's boot was Mission Dolores Cemetery, which hosts more than 5,000 Ohlone and Miwok Indians who helped build the mission in the 18th century.

Across the bay in Oakland, 400-plus victims of the Jonestown Massacre are buried in a mass grave at Evergreen Cemetery, and Mountain View Cemetery is home to famous architects Julia Morgan and Bernard Maybeck, coffee king James Folger and Domenico Ghirardelli.

"We certainly do have very interesting people buried up here, but Southern Californians might disagree about which area is more interesting," said Alison Moore, reference librarian for the California Historical Society. "They have all those

Hollywood types down there (i.e., stars at Forest Lawn include Steve Allen, Bette Davis and more).

"We tend to take our cemeteries more seriously up here, though," Moore added. "Maybe that's the big difference."

Serious or not, like their living counterparts, the Bay Area's deceased celebrities got plenty of ink in *The Chronicle* when they met their ends—and they get plenty of visitors to this day.

Take the best-known local underground celebrity of all: Wild West hero Wyatt Earp. He's at Hills of Eternity Memorial Park in Colma. Every day at least one, and usually two, people visit the 3-foot-high, black marble headstone perched above the cremated remains of Earp and his wife.

Earp being Earp—i.e., gambler, buffalo hunter and deputy marshal survivor of the 1881 gunfight at the OK Corral in Tombstone, Ariz.—those who come leave bullets, poker chips and coins on his grave. But what they leave more often is pebbles - an indicator of one of the least-known facts about the cowboy legend other than the fact that his ashes lie in here. And that is that he is buried in a Jewish cemetery.

Earp is there because his wife, Josephine "Sadie" Marcus Earp, was from a prominent Jewish family in San Francisco. Leaving pebbles on graves is a sign of high respect for the departed in Jewish tradition.

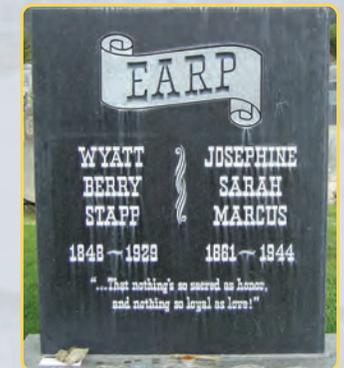
"Wow, I guess he's still a popular guy," said 20-year-old Sean Meyers of San Francisco, who came one recent day to take his first view of Earp's stone. "Look at all that stuff on the grave."

The stone, which lists both Earp and his wife, bore 38 pennies, a lemon and 17 pebbles. Other than the offerings, though, what surprised Meyers the most was the dates on the marker.

Earp's dates of life were 1848 to 1929 (making him nearly 81 years old at death) and Marcus's were 1861 to 1944 (making her 83 at death). We usually expect Wild West figures to predate the 1900s, Meyers mused.

"You know, he never got shot, not even nicked once," said Meyers, almost reverently. "That's pretty good for a lawman back in those days. He sure lived a long time.

"Who would ever guess he's here?"



The Earp tombstone

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Fall of Necropolis: Alive Online

 Check out our blog: fallofnecropolis.blogspot.com

 Twitter: twitter.com/onecityonebook
(Tweet with #necropolis to join the discussion)

One City One Book on SFPL: sfpl.org/ocob

 One City One Book is on **Facebook** too!

Donut & Coffee

We know it's a stereotype, but cops love their coffee and donuts! In celebration of the main character's profession, we are partnering with two local companies to offer custom flavors this fall.

In proud support of *Alive in Necropolis* and the One City One Book program, **Dynamo Donuts** is featuring the "Colma Copper" blueberry cornmeal donuts on its menu of artisan donuts for the months of September and October. Dynamo Donuts is at 2760 24th St. in SF. dynamosf.com/

Blue Bottle Coffee will be roasting and selling "Gayo Supreme/Necropolis," a rich and bold single origin Sumatran coffee. The lot will be sold exclusively for SFPL this fall, and a dollar from every pound sold will be donated to the Friends of the Library, in support of OCOB. Raisins, port, and the sweet earthiness of the candy cap mushroom all ooze out of this coffee, which will be especially yummy with Dynamo Donuts' "Colma Copper." Find the coffee online or at Blue Bottle's shops: bluebottlecoffee.net/
Delicious!

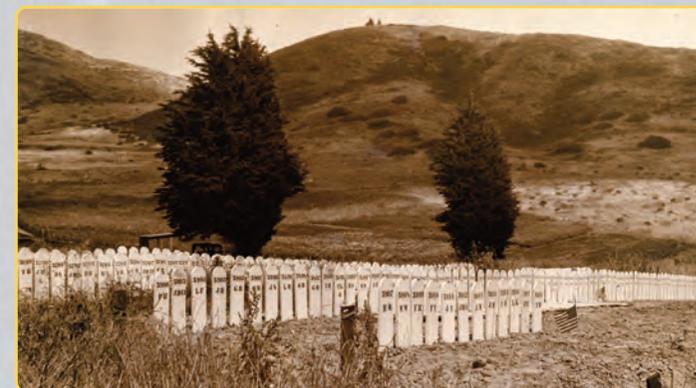
The Writers' Block

Listen to Doug Dorst read an excerpt on KQED's The Writers' Block, a weekly reading series featuring stories, essays and poetry by all kinds of writers.
www.kqed.org/writersblock

Book Club in a Box

Book Club in a Box is a new service from San Francisco Public Library that provides an all-in-one check-out for book clubs. These are an excellent resource for your book group!

In each box you will find 10 copies of the book and a binder with information about the author, discussion questions, reviews, interviews and more. Titles available include *Alive in Necropolis*, *The Kite Runner*, *The Complete Persepolis*, *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* and more! Boxes are available at the Main Library, First Floor Page Desk. Check out sfpl.org/bookclubinabox for more information.



Colma Cemetery Potter's Field. Courtesy S.F. Historical Photograph Collection

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